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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4200

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUDAPEST 000384

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CE JAMIE LAMORE, EUR/PGI JODY
BUCKNEBERG, AND DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/27/2019

TAGS: PGOV PREL PHUM KDEM HU

SUBJECT: ALLEGED MAGYAR GARDA MEMBER ATTACKS ROMA FAMILY

REF: BUDAPEST 00168

Classified By: Acting Pol/Econ Counselor Steve Weston for reasons
1.4 (a,d)

¶1. (SBU) Post is closely following a violent attack on a Roma family from the village of Abadszalok in eastern Hungary. On May 27th at approximately 3:00 a.m. local time, a man entered the family's home and attacked the mother and father with a razor blade, slashing their throats, chests, and legs. Both victims were asleep in their bed immediately prior to the attack. Their son who was asleep between them was unharmed.

¶2. (SBU) According to news reports, neighbors living nearby successfully detained the perpetrator until the police arrived. The 46-year-old suspect is currently in police custody. The police spokeswoman stated that the crime scene was sealed off and an investigation is currently underway.

¶3. (U) Although the incident occurred less than 12 hours ago, allegations about the suspect and the victim's backgrounds are already circulating across the internet. Several media outlets have reported that the suspect has ties to the extremist group Magyar Garda and has bragged about his involvement in previous attacks on Roma. There are also allegations that he previously served as a soldier in the military. Magyar Garda issued a press release denying that the suspect has any connection to their group. The male victim told the media that the attacker was wearing military boots, had a pistol strapped to his belt, and was wearing a hood at the time of the attack.

¶4. (C) The extremist website kuruc.info published information that the male victim was a notorious loan shark who preyed upon vulnerable families who could be coerced into accepting substantial loans with exorbitant interest rates. The article quoted a alleged resident of Abadszalok who said that the victim's tactics "destroyed many families," including one where the father became a drug addict, the mother became psychologically unstable, and their six children were taken into state custody. (Comment: In other recent attacks against Roma, extremist groups have attempted to portray the victims as criminals, suggesting they are either directly or indirectly responsible for the crimes committed against them. In some cases, the mainstream media has made similar suggestions. End comment.)

¶5. (C) The modus operandi of this attack appears different from the other recent violent attacks against Roma. In those cases, police have reported several common characteristics linking the crimes. Most notably, previous attacks have involved a firearm, targeted the last house in a community, and took place in villages adjacent to major highways (reftel). Also, although only one arrest has been made to date, the police speculate that the perpetrators are not from the villages where the attacks took place. In the incident this morning, the perpetrator targeted a home in the middle of the street near the center of town and used a razor blade

instead of a gun. The village of Abadszalok is also approximately 30 miles from the nearest major highway. The suspect is allegedly a resident of the community as well.

¶6. (C) RSO and LEGATT have both been asked to seek additional information from law enforcement contacts.

Levine